



Wisconsin Ag Exports Reach Record Value in 2012

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MADISON – Wisconsin agricultural exports had a record-setting year in 2012. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) announced today that from January to December 2012, Wisconsin exported over \$2.9 billion worth of agricultural products, an increase of 3% compared to the same time period in 2011 and the highest value ever for the state.

“Wisconsin continues to increase its agricultural exports in the international marketplace, exporting agricultural products to 149 countries in 2012,” said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. “Wisconsin now ranks 13th in the nation for the value of agricultural exports, up from 16th in 2011. I applaud the commitment of Wisconsin’s agricultural companies to market their high-quality products around the world.”

DATCP’s Wisconsin International Trade Team helps those agricultural companies achieve exporting success by offering a broad array of services including education seminars, one-on-one consultations, market overview studies, and trade and buyers missions. Assistance is available for the beginner, intermediate or advanced exporter.

Wisconsin’s most valuable markets for agricultural products in 2012 were: Canada, Mexico, China, Korea and Japan. Wisconsin’s top agricultural export destination in 2012 was Canada, importing \$1.45 billion of agricultural products from the state.

The market showing the biggest growth was China with a 49% increase of agricultural product value from Wisconsin in 2012. The most valuable exports to China last year were hides and skins, animal feed and dairy-related products.

China is the primary destination for the animal feed products of Bio-Nutrition International, Inc. in Madison. Last year, Bio-Nutrition’s exports of whey permeate, dried distiller grains, soybean meal and other raw material products were excellent and continued to increase. Bio-Nutrition participates in the Branded Program™ with DATCP, which provides cost reimbursement for international marketing activities for food and agricultural products.

“There is continued demand for our animal feed products in China due to robust economic growth, and we expect to expand our distribution to include other East Asian countries. The Chinese favor and trust the high quality feed ingredients produced in the American Midwest based on dried whey powders, distillers dried grains and soybean meal,” said Benjamin Shih of Bio-Nutrition. “By exporting overseas we diversify our portfolio and mitigate the volatility of commodity markets. I encourage interested companies to explore the valuable resources offered by the Branded Program™ and to attend their seminars and online webinars.”

The most valuable agricultural export for Wisconsin in 2012 was beverages at \$400 million. The beverage category is primarily ethanol. Wisconsin ranks second in the nation in exports of ethanol behind Texas. Almost all of Wisconsin’s ethanol exports, valued at \$282 million, is exported to Canada.

Miscellaneous food was Wisconsin’s second most valuable agricultural export in 2012 at \$290 million. This includes ingredients, sauces, yeasts and mustards. The miscellaneous food category increased 16% in value over 2011.

Dairy-related products, including eggs and honey, were Wisconsin’s third most valuable agricultural export last year. Wisconsin’s dairy-related exports totaled \$282 million in 2012, an increase of 22% compared to 2011. Within this sector, cheese saw the greatest increase in export value as compared to other dairy products. The state now ranks fourth nationwide for the value of dairy products, up from fifth in 2011.

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Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery started working with DATCP about five years ago to learn more about the international marketplace and initiate contacts to begin exporting. The Creamery has increased its exports of dry sweet whey, primarily to the Asian markets, each year since they began.

“Exporting is a very important part of our company’s future,” said John Freyholtz, an Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery Supervisor. “By building connections with the right people, we have been able to ensure our quality product is well-represented overseas.”

Partnerships such as these have contributed to the record setting year of agricultural exports.

Baking-related items and preserved foods were the fourth and fifth most valuable agricultural export categories in 2012 respectively. The state exported \$220 million of baking-related items, including malt extract, dough and pastry mixes. Wisconsin exported \$200 million of preserved foods in 2012, an increase of 26% over 2011. Preserved foods include canned sweet corn, potatoes, cranberries and cranberry juice.

Wisconsin agribusiness companies thinking about exporting their products should contact the Wisconsin International Trade Team at 1-800-462-5237 or international@wisconsin.gov.

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